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### Health and wellbeing and wider achievement

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# **Health and wellbeing and wider achievement: An analysis of teachers' practices and learners' experiences in Scottish secondary schools**

## **Abstract**

There is a heightened policy expectation in Scotland that a greater curriculum emphasis on health and wellbeing (HWB) will positively contribute to learners' reflections on their wider achievements. However, in terms of policy enactment, relatively little is known on the interrelationship between HWB and learners' wider achievements. To address this limitation, data was gathered from four secondary schools in East central Scotland via an online survey, eight learner group interviews and eight teacher interviews. Findings indicated that learners' grasp of how HWB connects with their broader achievements was generally vague and imprecise. Despite many areas of positive self-reporting learners' progress was hampered by their lack of confidence in speaking in front of others and modest sense of school belonging. In addition, the practice gains anticipated through making HWB a more central feature of all learners' broad general education were constrained by teachers' variable level of engagement with their new roles and responsibilities, and by logistical problems in recording learners' achievements. Further research which collects more extensive data on the weaknesses identified and on understanding learners' HWB experiences better would contribute to a more insightful analysis of how schools enact policy and record achievement.

**Key words:** health and wellbeing; wider achievement; learning and teaching; policy enactment; professional practice; learners experiences

## **Introduction**

Health awareness has become a prominent component of public policy in recent years with its importance broadening out to include wellbeing as a distinctive feature of educational provision (Soutter, O'Steen and Gilmore, 2012; Author, 2014). These intentions reflect the heightened global interest there is in educating for HWB; the belief that even when beset by troubled economic times schools can be a civilizing force for good that can help make young peoples' lives more fulfilling and meaningful (Dunn & Layard, 2009). In England and Wales, the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, launched over a decade ago (Department for Education and Skills, 2004) articulates closely with the 'Getting it Right for Every Child' programme (GIRFEC) in Scotland. This programme is supported by references to a set of eight SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included) indicators which schools are expected to incorporate into their whole school planning (Scottish Executive, 2006b). Thus, schools across much of the United Kingdom are a conduit for addressing a plethora of wider concerns about learners' social, emotional, mental and

physical wellbeing (Watson, Emery & Bayliss, 2012). Whether this is a good idea or not is contested. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) and Ecclestone and Lewis (2013), for example, consider that it is misguided for education policies to overly focus on social and emotional aspects of learning, as it can result in learners becoming dependent on support rather than gaining dignity and self-respect through developing resilience. Moreover, Watson et al., (2012) believe that current policy and practice misjudge how to plan and teach wellbeing, as the focus is insufficiently on the subjective experiences of the child relative to objective measurement metrics. Furthermore, in terms of curriculum implementation in England, Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigglesworth (2010) in their national evaluation of social and emotional aspects of learning in secondary schools, describe a very inconsistent picture of implementation. Formby and Wolstenholme (2012) also found that many secondary schools in England used discrete lessons and thematic days as teaching approaches rather than integrating Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) with subject knowledge and learners prior learning experiences. They also noted that teaching PSHE was sometimes viewed as more of an obstruction than a benefit to the academic life of the school and therefore of little, if any help, in raising attainment and recognising learners wider achievements.

In Scotland, Humes (2013a, p. 19) considers that policy enactment within the broader national framework of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) has been compromised by the lack of ‘extended philosophical justification for the particular values which are highlighted.’ This concern is mirrored by Watson et al., (2012, 49) who argue that behind the bland language of many current policies ‘stands a covert rubric of values, un-debated and on which consensus is assumed.’ Furthermore, in terms of Scottish policy implementation, Porciani (2013) found that as far as HWB in secondary schools is concerned, there is often a difference between teachers’ desire for greater pedagogical guidance and national curriculum organizations which expect teachers to take on greater responsibility for their own practices. This is perhaps to be anticipated given that as Humes (2013b, p. 82) recognises, policy plans for greater holistic and interdisciplinary learning approaches remain

‘well-intentioned but rather ill-defined.’ Moreover, in terms of measuring HWB gains as part of CfE, Lingard and McGregor (2013, p. 210) note that the ‘New Basics’ programme in Queensland, Australia which ‘had quite a bit in common with Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence’ has since ‘passed into the dustbin of Queensland educational history’ due to political unease about the comparative standards of educational achievement being realised (Lingard & McGregor, 2013, p. 225).

These various challenges however have not as yet dampened enthusiasm and support for the case that enhanced HWB can positively support learners’ wider achievement and improve academic outcomes. Gutman and Vorhaus (2012, p. 6), for example, consider that school engagement in the early secondary school years, i.e., 11-16 years, ‘is a significant predictor of greater academic progression’ and therefore nurturing learners’ motivation and wellbeing is key for improving achievement in adolescence. However, relatively little remains known on the detail of the interrelationship between HWB and wider achievement, and this makes it difficult to draw clear conclusions about causality when measuring HWB gains (Public Health England, 2014; McLellan & Steward, 2014). This is especially so when trying to understand learners’ perspectives on their learning experiences. For example, in Scotland, despite the extensive analysis of CfE policy aims, policy implementation and curriculum planning which has taken place, e.g., Bryce & Humes (2008); Bryce, Humes, Gillies & Kennedy (2013); Priestley & Biesta (2013), relatively little research has focussed on the quality of learners’ learning and assessment experiences. This situation is reflected across the United Kingdom (Bywater & Sharples, 2012), and as such Banerjee et al., (2014) call for further investigations which research the various ways in which policy enactment occurs. With this in mind, learners’ views on HWB and their wider achievements are analysed alongside consideration of teachers HWB roles and responsibilities in order to understand better the opportunities there might be for HWB to become a fully integrated component of CfE ambitions. The paper continues by describing recent policy developments in HWB and wider achievement

prior to outlining the methodologies which informed data collection. Thereafter, findings are analysed and discussed relative to many of the professional and practice issues raised. The collective intention of these efforts is that the paper will add to evidence on the extent to which the HWB-related dimensions of school life articulate with learners' perceptions of their broader achievements (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg & Walberg, 2007).

### **The Scottish policy context**

Since the turn of the century new devolutionary powers have highlighted how health improvement should become a key policy area with successive announcements confirming that curriculum aims can best be achieved if children are healthy, emotionally secure and psychologically at ease with themselves (Author, 2014). On this basis, mapping out policy aspirations has involved balancing narrowly defined health targets (e.g., monitoring physical activity levels) with a universal endorsement for personal wellbeing that reflects an interest in the development and wider achievement of the whole child (Porciani, 2013). From the outset it was recognized that assessment should be integrated with learning, and teaching, with it being noted that we 'need to develop straightforward and simple ways of doing this, especially so that the process of assessment do not distort the intrinsic value and satisfaction of achievement' (Scottish Executive, 2006a, p. 17). To emphasise this approach, experience and outcome statements were written from a first-person learners' perspective with experiences setting out the 'expectations for the kinds of activities which will promote learning and development' and outcomes which define what learners will be able to explain, apply or demonstrate (Scottish Government, 2008, p. 23). At this time, the importance of the mid stage of secondary schooling (i.e., at the end of S3 at age 15) was confirmed, as an 'opportunity to bring together the teachers judgments and the young person's own record of their achievements and skills by drawing upon a wide range of evidence' (Scottish Government, 2008, p. 6). Thus, it is expected that 'the deeper and richer learning provided by the experiences and outcomes will lead to young people reaching ... a level of attainment and achievement which is

deeper and more secure than at present' (Scottish Government, 2008, p. 24). To enhance the prospect of this occurring 'all learners should be involved in planning and reflecting on their own learning, through formative assessment, self and peer evaluation and personal learning planning' (Scottish Government, 2008, p. 27). These methods mutually support the 'processes of recognising achievement and profiling and the processes involved in the GIRFEC practice model' (Scottish Government, 2010, p. 6).

During the CfE development period, Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), a public body organization responsible for the development and support of the Scottish curriculum, prior to its merger with Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education to form 'Education Scotland' in 2011, issued principles and practice advice on HWB for all teachers to consider as part of their remit (LTS, 2009a). In the same year, six specific areas of HWB covering 51 experiences and outcomes statements on: Mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing; Planning for choices and changes; Physical education, physical activity and sport; Food and health; Substance misuse and Relationships, sexual health and parenthood) were identified (LTS 2009b). However, unlike the vast majority of other curriculum areas, many of the HWB experience and outcome statements are not progressive, but are repeated verbatim across successive stages of development. Since 2009 the experience and outcome statements have not been revised. In 2013 and 2014, following the phased introduction of CfE which started in 2010-2011, a trio of Education Scotland reports analysed: the relative benefits and limitations of current HWB practice (Education Scotland, 2013a); associated key strengths and aspects for development (Education Scotland, 2013b) and some of the emerging issues for teachers in making curriculum links to HWB (Education Scotland, 2014). For example, the latter report justifies maintaining single (non-progressive) outcome statements across various levels of achievement, through noting that 'it would seem counterproductive to designate a particular level for a learners achievement in health and wellbeing, where the learner's development and progress is dependent on a variety of factors and life circumstances which can change quickly'

(Education Scotland, 2014, 10). Collectively, these reports aim to provide support for teachers' curriculum planning and to highlight the multiple points of connection between HWB and the four generic contexts for learning which underpin CfE i.e., the ethos and life of the school as a community; curriculum areas and subjects; interdisciplinary learning and opportunities for personal achievement (Scottish Government, 2008).

To further support the implementation of CfE, an ongoing series of Briefing Papers covered a range of enactment matters such as 'Profiling and the S3 profile' (Education Scotland, 2012). This paper explains that the S3 profile should build on the end of primary school (P7) profile and provide a 'full account of their cumulative progress and achievements' and of what learners consider their latest and best successes (Education Scotland, 2012, p. 1). Teachers should provide supportive discussions within a context which recognises that learners need space and opportunities in order to take active ownership of their profile. Collectively, therefore, the S3 profile should support 'learners in developing their awareness and understanding of their own learning and resulting successes' (Education Scotland, 2012, p. 2). While the school profile is 'likely to include a reliable profile of achievement in literacy and numeracy and information about progress in key aspects of health and wellbeing' (Education Scotland, 2012, p. 3) it will be distinguishable from a more traditional school report in that learners have ownership of the information they choose to share with others. Nevertheless, as appropriate 'quality assurance and moderation are needed to ensure that the information in the profile is reliable and that it is seen to validate achievements' (Education Scotland, 2012, p. 2).

## **Methodology**

### ***Introduction***

The research was informed by 'democratic practical research' protocols (Hammersley, 2002, p. 121) with the purpose of the applied social research being to collect insightful information from

learners and teachers alike on HWB and wider achievement. Data collection, which took place during the second quarter of 2015, comprised an online learner survey, eight focus group interviews with learners and eight interviews with teachers in four secondary schools in East central Scotland. Survey and interview prompts were informed by aforementioned reviews of policy documents e.g., Education Scotland (2013a), general academic reviews of CfE, e.g., Bryce et al., (2013) and by articles which specifically focused on HWB as part of CfE e.g., Porciani (2013); Author (2014).

### ***Participants***

Survey data was collected through 438 learners: School A, 63; School B, 122; School C, 128; School D, 125. As the survey only gauged the strength of response to short statements, Head teachers' informed consent was sufficient for ethical approval by the relevant Universities as it met in full the local authority permission guidelines under which the Head teachers were operating. For the focus group interviews, signed learner and parent/carer approval was gained for each interviewee and teacher interviewees also provided written permission to record interviews. All interviewees were provided with a confidentiality guarantee that they would not be named in subsequent analysis and reporting. Collectively, these procedures are consistent with British Educational Research Association ethical guidelines for completing surveys and professional interviews and with the relevant Universities ethical protocols for completing interview-based research. The schools varied in terms of size and socio-economic status: School A, 707 pupils and 27.0% free school meals eligibility; School B, 1024/8.2%; School C, 971/12.7% and School D, 939/24.0%.

### ***Procedures***

#### ***Survey***

The surveys were completed online in school with learners recording their response via a five item Likert scale from 'strongly disagree through to 'strongly agree'. There were 12 statements on HWB



and 12 on wider achievement (Table 1). The response statements were divided into 4x3 areas with the focus in HWB being on: engagement with HWB; self-confidence; relationships with others and sense of belonging in the school/community. The statements on wider achievement focussed on: the benefits of the S3 profile; motivation/resilience; future learning priorities and helpfulness of teachers in recording achievements. The rationale for this strategy **i.e., dividing the response statement into 4 x 3 specific areas** was to ensure there was coherence between the key policy documents outlining experiences and outcomes definition within HWB (i.e., LTS, 2009b), the prospect for all learners to be involved in reflecting on their learning through personal learning planning (i.e., Scottish Government, 2010) and the survey prompts learners were invited to consider. We considered that the benefits of this approach overtook its most noticeable limitation i.e., that survey prompts restricted exploration of further aspects of HWB and wider achievement it would interesting to review e.g., teacher/learner relationships. In each of the 4x3 areas, one of the response statements was reversed so that, for example, a 'strongly disagree' response would be processed as a 'strongly agree' response during data analysis (Table 1). This strategy encouraged respondents to read statements carefully and select appropriate responses from across the scale choices available (Hartley & Betts, 2010). The survey was piloted among colleagues prior to additional piloting taking place with the year group who were one year ahead of the sample group, i.e., age 16 years, in one of the four schools taking part in the research. This approach ensured the piloting exercise was completed by learners who were broadly familiar with the statements requiring consideration. It led to a small number of changes being made to the wording of statements and other minor changes e.g., emoticons were removed as these were considered to be more judgemental than supportive and too juvenile for secondary age learners (McLellan & Stewart, 2015).

### *Focus group interviews*

We invited a random alphabetical sample of male and female learners who has completed the online survey to participate in focus group interviews. This enabled two mixed focus group interviews to take place in each school with interviews facilitated by two volunteer senior school student helpers (age 17 years). Okun and Kantrowitz, (2007) advises that using helper assistance on a semi-formal basis can help build good relationships among those being interviewed, provided facilitators have effective communication skills. To support the development of students communication skills guidance was provided at a University-based half-day training session led by the second author. The guidance concentrated on how to effectively manage a focus group interview e.g., on the need to use learners' names to identify respondents and strategies for involving all interviewees in discussion. The session also covered how to be alert to potentially awkward moments occurring and how to interject and respond to these as facilitators. For example, during interviews it was not expected or desired that learners revealed excessively personal information about their circumstances and school experiences, and hence if this appeared to be happening facilitators should interject accordingly. These approaches were consistent with matching Gibbs (2012, p. 188) intention that the key characteristic of facilitators is 'good interpersonal skills and the ability to handle conflict as well as to nurture contributions, thus enabling interaction between participants while being reflective and non-judgemental.' The focus groups lasted approximately 30mins (range 19 to 44 minutes) with the facilitators being provided with a list of eight lead questions to focus on with two accompanying prompt points per question being available should they see possibilities for extending shared discussion (Table 2). The lead questions closely reflected the eight statement areas in the online survey.

### *Teacher interviews*

The authors conducted teacher interviews on a one-to-one basis with the aim being to engage teachers in structured but relatively open conversations which allowed scope for extended answers that covered the broad range of questions exemplified (Table 3). In order that the teachers

interviewed could provide an informed perspective of HWB and wider achievement developments over recent years, teachers interviewed all had a current remit which contained an extended responsibility for guidance and pastoral education in addition to subject teaching. The teacher interviews lasted approximately 40mins (range 36 to 52 minutes). As for the focus group interviewees, the authors had a list of lead questions to help structure the interview along with prompt points per question should the opportunities for extended discussion arise (Table 3).

### ***Data analysis***

The combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies supported an integrated analytical approach. Data from the online survey were analysed through using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) database. Initial descriptive statistics were generated through SPSS according to the aforementioned survey areas with results aligned with the more extended findings arising from focus group and teacher interviews. The comprehensive interpretive analysis of interviews began with transcripts being carefully transcribed and independently listened to in order to ensure accuracy of meaning (Silverman, 2006). Multiple readings allowed patterns, commonalities and relationships relevant to policy and practice to be recognized. This enabled consensus meetings between authors to take place where data was thematically analysed with analysis being informed by learners' perceptions of the value of HWB and the S3 profile and by teachers' review of their new professional roles and responsibilities in these areas. Adopting this approach ensured that key themes were not accepted as static but problematized in order that probing and reviewing key issues was ongoing as data collection and analysis occurred concurrently. This approach enabled conflicting views to be represented rather than rejected (Corbin & Strauss, 2007).

## **Findings**

### ***Survey***

Table 4 contains descriptive statistics for all learners who responded to statements on HWB and wider achievement. Table 5 provides school specific figures for the same statements. Findings indicate that for HWB in general (i.e., first three statements listed in Table 4) that over three-fifths of learners considered their school had helped them to develop their HWB with nearly three quarters of learners confirming that they considered themselves to have a good grasp of their personal qualities. This was particularly so in school D where over nine-tenths of learners were clear on this matter (Table 5). When asked about their confidence in school just under two-thirds of learners considered they were doing well in these areas with a little over half of learners considering that they were confident in managing their feelings. However, when it came to confidence in speaking in front of the class less than a third of learners considered they were confident. This finding was broadly reflected across all schools (Table 5). Learners were upbeat about their relationships with friends with over four-fifths of learners confirming they had positive friendships in school with a slightly lower three quarters of learners confirming they had developed good coping skills in their relationships with friends. In terms of a sense of school belonging in their school community just under half of learners were positive on this matter with just over half of learners confirming that they had good relationships with teachers and a little under half of learners agreeing that teachers listened to them.

Regarding learners wider achievements, just over half of learners confirmed that the S3 profile was a useful tool for reviewing learning progress. However, only a little over a third of learners considered that the S3 profile was helpful in recording information on how well they considered they were doing at school with a little under half of learners considering that the S3 profile provided the chance to record wider achievements which were important to them. Support was stronger in School D where nearly three-fifths of learners were clear on the benefits of the profile for recording achievements relative to School B where under a third of learners were of this view (Table 5). Learners were in strong agreement that they worked hard at school. Over four-fifths of learners confirmed this to be the case (Table 4). Yet only just over two-fifths of learners considered that the

S3 profile was helpful when making course choice decisions. School findings were divided on this point with just over half of learners in School A and School D considering the S3 profile helpful in making course choices relative to around a third in School B and School C. In terms of teacher involvement in completing the S3 profile, a little over a third of learners considered that teachers made helpful comments on course choices with a little less than half of learners believing that teachers made good suggestions on what to include in their S3 profile. There was however quite acute differences between schools. For example, in School D over two-thirds of learners considered that teachers made helpful suggestions while in School B only just over a fifth of learners believed this to be the case.

*Enter Table 4 and Table 5 close to here*

### ***Learner interviews***

Findings highlighted that generally it proved quite difficult for the volunteer helpers to engage learners in discussions on their HWB and wider achievements. This was not due to their ineffectiveness (they were unfailingly polite, followed the question order and prompts provided, ensured learners had a chance to speak as often as possible and asked if they had any questions they would like to ask) but rather was a result of interviewees lack of basic familiarity with what HWB and wider achievement were about. This is evident as well in the survey findings where just over a quarter of all HWB responses were a 'neither agree/disagree response' with over a third of wider achievement responses resulting in the same response (Table 4). As one learner (School D, 11/6/15) succinctly stated: 'teachers need to explain what HWB is.' In all schools, HWB was largely assumed to be the period assigned to personal and social education (PSE) rather than time spent at physical education or home economics, or through considering HWB as a more integrated component of learning across the curriculum. Perceptions of the value of HWB varied with some complaining that learning was dull e.g., watching short films which described consuming alcohol as bad while others viewed HWB as 'like taking a break, you get to go to back to a familiar class and

meet your old friends and have fun' (School D, 11/6/15). Other learners were more positive e.g., one stating that 'I think PSE about bullying and relationships has been really helpful' (School D, 11/6/15). Learners generally considered themselves to be quite confident and to have good relationships with friends. However, learners in all schools mentioned that presenting in front of the class was not one of these situations. As one learner stated: 'There is a lot of focus about talking in front of the class, I am not happy to do that' (School A, 8/6/15). Others recognised its benefits as well as pressures, for example, 'Sometimes it's better if school force you to do something like a presentation as it's helpful at boosting your confidence' (School C, 10/6/15). Overall, while most learners had positive relationships with their peers this was not always so. As one learner noted: 'I get nervous coming to school especially since some learners are hard to get along with and you don't know how they are going to be' (School A, 8/6/2015). Relationships with teachers varied but most were considered constructive with teachers' role in promoting and sustaining extra curriculum activities appreciated.

As regards wider achievement learners mostly expressed the view that the longer they were in secondary education the more seriously they took learning (Table 4). For three of the four schools (Schools A, C & D) answers were more elaborate on the benefits of profiling wider achievements with learners in School D in particular offering more extended responses. This may have been due to the S3 profile (e-portfolio) being a more established part of their school year i.e., in its fourth year relative to the other three schools which had one or two years' experience of recording learners wider achievements. However, across all schools, the advantages of documenting reflective-based progress and goals were often overtaken by the rushed and confused ways in which schools completed the process. Accordingly, learner opinions varied from 'a waste of time' (School C, 10/6/15) through to something which 'can help you feel proud about what you have achieved' and a positive aspect of school life (School D, 11/6/15). Other learners commented that they felt uncomfortable writing about their achievements in school as 'I don't want to be too big headed

writing down what I'm good at' (School C, 10/6/15) while others commented that 'having people in the room when doing the e-portfolio made it difficult to write down my skills' (School D, 11/6/15). There were often problems with learners gaining online access and of needing to document achievements without having had time to prepare the profile properly. Three of the schools (Schools A, B & D) have moved to a twice-weekly half-hour vertical system of tutor time with learners from all years i.e., from S1 (12 years) to S6 (17 years) in the same group. Comments on this development were largely unfavourable with learners often unaware of the perceived benefits of this initiative. Teachers were generally considered to offer helpful support however this was at times oversimplistic and one-dimensional. For example, one learner (School C, 10/6/15) pointed out that 'just because you are good at a subject does not necessarily mean you wish to study it' in the future with another commenting that 'their teacher did not know too much about profiling skills' (School D, 11/6/15). In School C there was encouragement to provide peer feedback before writing comments, and as one learner pointed out: 'When I discussed this with a friend she told me things about myself I wouldn't have thought about' (School C, 10/6/15).

### ***Teacher interviews***

In general there was a high degree of endorsement for the aims of CfE. Teachers appreciated its focus in taking into account learners' individual needs and agreed with the broad general education emphasis in the school curriculum from 3-15 years. As one teacher noted 'fewer staff are being militant in their viewpoints nowadays' (School C, 10/6/15). However, implementation had taken place during a time of economic constraints in education funding. This had impacted on levels of professional support e.g., availability of exemplar materials and time for engaging teachers in discussions on CfE aims and purposes. Consequently many teachers found increased teacher workload a concern. This was reflected in a mixed level of volunteering to take part in working groups across schools with various teachers citing difficulties in engaging with policies which were beyond the specifics of their individual remit. There was also little time available for evaluating practice.

There were similarities and differences in the approaches schools adopted for including HWB in the curriculum. All schools had an end of school year 'health week' where atypical timetable arrangements applied and where the learning focus was on predominantly on a range of activity and lifestyle related practical experiences. As noted earlier, three schools were linking HWB to new tutor time initiatives, however as with learners this was considered a mixed success with some teachers feeling pressured by their change of remit and by learner disquiet about not being able to mix with many of their peers. As the intention was for learners to remain with the same group (i.e., for each of the six school years), planning progressive learning materials to avoid repetitious experiences was a concern which greater project-based approaches and collaborative learning were intended to address. School D had introduced a more wide ranging professional development programme to meet this need while School B were more inclined to consider for the time being that teachers have the skills to meet learners needs but may lack the specific skills to cope with more demanding issues such as mental health. In schools A & B the responsibility for all aspect of HWB had led to some confusion about the roles and responsibilities of teachers relative to those teachers who have an enhanced remit for guidance and pupil support.

Two schools (School B & D) planned to use tutor time for the completion of learners' portfolios while in the other schools it was completed as part of personal and social education time. Progress was patchy at best. In two schools, (School, A & D) there was a particular focus on skills for life and their academic/employment benefit, so that 'by the end of schooling learners will know what their skills are' (School A, 8/6/15). However, in all schools there was difficulty in getting learners to dwell on their wider achievements, especially in ways which included more nuanced reflections on HWB. There was (as with learners) criticism of levels of online access in schools but more fundamentally there were difficulties in helping learners comprehend the purpose of the profile. As one teacher commented 'It has been hard work to organise and get learners motivated and to get



them to understand the relevance of it ... they are not used to that, they are not confident, it's been a long process, every year we are finding it is getting better and better, but it is a slow process' (School D). A mixed approach also existed with regard to the formal assessing of HWB. In three schools (Schools A, B & C) HWB was not formally assessed and in School D (11/6/15) one teacher noted that particular outcomes have 'been extracted (as) we cannot cover them all'. Generally most teachers considered that the experiences and outcomes in HWB were not easily measurable.

## **Discussion**

While Durlak, Weissburg, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schnellinger (2011) found that school-based interventions can positively influence a range of social and emotional learning outcomes and foster a sense of achievement, implementation progress in these areas has often been variable (Humphrey et al., 2010); with as Banerjee et al., (2014, p. 718) note, policy enactment often being 'uncoordinated, piecemeal and incomplete'. Findings from this study reflect this pattern; good things stated and spoken but also rather disjointed and fragmented progress overall. The forthcoming discussion reflects this mix with general evidence of progress contrasting with specific areas of concern. For example, the majority of learners considered that they had a good grasp of their personal qualities and believed their school made a helpful contribution to their HWB. However, this positive endorsement did not extend to considering that the new system of tutor time was time well spent. Education Scotland (2013a, p. 13) recognises this problem and note that 'staff and learners are not always clear about the purpose of these personal support sessions and the contribution they can make towards improving health and wellbeing. This lack of understanding and purpose leads to this valuable time for learning and support often being spent ineffectively.' These findings suggest that HWB would benefit from being a greater contributor to whole school conversations on how learners would like to learn in HWB and on how learning could be planned in ways that move beyond a reliance on 'an annual health week approach' (Education Scotland, 2013b, p. 2). Pursued this way the greater the likelihood there is of teachers improving their capacity to listen to learners

and their expertise in knowing how to effectively respond to a diverse range of novel situations. These beginnings could also be productively extended to include discussions on how learning gains can be assessed and measured (Watson et al., 2012). Thus, evidence from the study supports Formby and Wolstenholme's (2012) findings on the difficulties many teachers and schools face in connecting HWB with significant aspects of learning and learners' wider achievements. Findings also reflect Porciani's (2013) concerns that there is a mismatch between teachers and policy makers' expectations on how policy can be taken forward in practice, both in terms of speed and quality.

In terms of having positive relationships with friends and good coping skills the views of learners was encouraging, as was their reporting of being confident at school and managing their feelings well. However, confidence gains did not extend to speaking in front of the class, with survey and learner interview findings confirming that this was difficult to do, even though it was often appreciated that schools should require learners to speak aloud as a method for increasing confidence. Given that becoming a 'confident individual' is one of four learner-centered intentions (along with 'successful learner', 'effective communicator' and 'responsible citizen') of CfE, noting that a majority of learners lacked confidence in speaking in class raises issues about how schools might proactively address this matter. For as Ecclestone (2013, 83) notes, confidence has shifted from being 'a by-product of doing something well, mastering a difficult subject or skill, or overcoming difficult life and educational experiences, into a fundamental resource, an essential form of capital for educational, work and life success.' In terms of sense of belonging in the school community, evidence supporting the centrality of HWB in informing wider achievements, might be dampened by the modest relations learners had with teachers, with less than half of learners considering that teachers listened to them. These findings are broadly consistent with Croxford and Howieson (2015) general evidence that learners enjoy the social side of their school experiences and appreciate teachers' efforts in providing extra-curriculum activities, even though problems and

relationships sometimes exist in ways which make being at school a difficult experience for some learners. However, given that there is currently ‘no systematic attempt by the Scottish Government to gather independent, nationally representative evidence of young people’s views of their school experiences’ (Croxford and Howieson, 2015, p. 66) it is difficult to be more specific at this stage on the implications of the HWB and wider achievement findings generated in this study.

As far as the benefits of the profile for recording learning progress and wider achievements are concerned, the evidence was mixed with only half of learners confirming the usefulness of the process. This response reflects the lack of time for documenting progress and the slightly chaotic and rushed arrangements which often existed. Various strategies were being adopted for completing the profile with teachers across all schools reporting difficulties in helping learners comprehend the purpose of the profile. Overall findings suggest that schools have some way to go before learners have a greater sense of ownership of their profile and are more fully involved in planning and reflecting on their learning and progress, as is expected (Scottish Government, 2008). Furthermore, little evidence was reported by teachers on moderation procedures being used to ensure that learners’ profiles were reliable and accurate and subject to review. This situation is redolent of numerous CfE evaluations, for example, Howieson (2015, p. 84) notes that while ‘CfE places schools and teachers at the centre of curriculum development ... it has not provided them with a clearly articulated model to guide their work’. Arguably, Education Scotland (2014) has taken some steps to address this limitation for HWB but plans appear less advanced as far as the S3 profile is concerned. Therefore findings on HWB and wider achievement are consistent with Priestley and Minty’s (2013, p. 45) evidence of there being a high level of ‘first order engagement’ with the main ideas and founding principles of CfE but where these big ideas are not clearly elaborated upon, and this allied with the slowness of response in producing curriculum guidance and materials has led to a variable second-order engagement with CfE (Priestley, Minty & Eager, 2014).

There was nevertheless evidence that over three-quarters of learners were keen to work hard with nearly two-thirds considering that they could bounce back from most disappointments. These findings could be interpreted differently. It could, for example, be considered that with further support materials, staff training and professional development these figures would increase further as connections between HWB, wider achievements and the founding principles of CfE become ever more embedded in school life. Alternately others such as Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) might consider these findings offer a reassurance that learners are generally well-adjusted, stable and mature and as such schools should spend less curriculum time on motivation/resilience type matters and focus instead of raising learners' knowledge levels. Moving forward therefore on how teachers should respond to such findings remains difficult; for as Priestley and Sinnema (2014) note, CfE continues to throw out mixed messages with regard to the place of knowledge in the curriculum. In terms of the helpfulness of teachers in making useful comments on course choices and what to include in their personal profile, less than half of learners considered that teachers were doing well. This mixed evidence of helpfulness, especially at offering personalised rather than general support, was reflected in learners' interview evidence as well. Schools were tackling these challenges in different ways with some introducing wide ranging development programmes to meet new professional demands with others considering that more targeted support was needed. This raises questions about how future professional expectations will be met. For while findings in this study align with Education Scotland (2013a) view that many teachers are unclear about their HWB role, their later elaboration that teachers often lack confidence and feel anxious about tackling sensitive issues while also stating that it 'is not necessary for every member of staff to be expert in relation to health and wellbeing' (p. 17) sends out a rather confusing message on future professional expectations.

## **Conclusion**

This study has conducted introductory research on attempts in Scotland for HWB to be a more obvious responsibility for all teachers and a central feature of learners reporting on their wider achievements. Evidence collected suggests that progress is generally modest and variable with schools finding it difficult to ‘micro-manage the multifarious range of factors’ that impact upon policy-in-action (Priestley & Miller, 2012, p. 99). The study has also highlighted that more acute concerns exist, especially with regard to learners’ confidence in speaking in class and the relatively modest relationships learners have with teachers. This is particularly so in terms of sharing dialogue on personalised learning and when discussing wider achievements. For these reasons it is important that school-wide attempts are made to improve teachers’ grasp of their HWB responsibilities in ways that can improve their listening and relationship skills, and which can help reduce the possibility of more serious learner-related issues remaining unknown about. Improvements in this way could lead to more targeted support being provided when necessary.

Overall, these findings support the view that while policy implementation continues to be conceived in logical straightforward terms, school-based policy enactment is for a whole number of reasons rarely linear and unproblematic (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012). As such, further research is required which collects a more extended data set on the problem areas identified and which also enables the broad area of HWB and wider achievement to be researched from the perspective of various learners e.g., according to age, gender, academic ability and other key learner characteristics. Research on this basis would enable learners’ experiences to be understood in greater detail, and when allied with a larger data set on teachers’ values and practices, enable more insightful in-school evaluations of practice to take place. This, in turn, could contribute to wider scale evaluations of policy enactment and reviews of school effectiveness.

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**Table 1: Health and wellbeing and wider achievement: Survey statements**

Please respond to the following statements by putting a tick (✓) in a box on each line. This will show how much you agree or disagree with the statements at this time.

<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree/ Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have developed my health and wellbeing at school					
I know what my personal qualities are					
I do NOT have a positive attitude towards health and wellbeing					
I am growing more confident at school					
I am NOT confident in managing my feelings					
I am confident at speaking in front of whole class					
I have good relationships with my friends at school					
I am developing good coping skills when with my friends					
I am NOT good at working through difficulties with my friends					
I feel a sense of belonging in my school community					
The teachers in my school do NOT listen to my concerns					
I have good relationships with my teachers at school					

**Table 1: Health and wellbeing and wider achievement: Survey statements (continued)**

<b>Wider achievement</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree/ Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The S3 profile gave me a good chance to think about my learning progress					
The S3 profile was NOT helpful for recording how well I think I'm doing at school					
The S3 profile gave me a good chance to record achievements which are important to me					
I have become more confident during my time at secondary school					
I can bounce back from most disappointments					
I am NOT motivated to do well at school					
The S3 profile has helped me feel better about my learning					
The S3 profile did NOT help me to think about what I want to do in the future					
The S3 profile help me to make decisions about my course choices					
Teachers comments on my S3 profile were helpful					
Teachers made good suggestions on what would be useful to include in my profile					
I did NOT think that sharing my ideas for my profile was helpful					

**Thank you for your help**

**Table 2: Health and wellbeing and wider achievement: Learner interview questions**

There are **eight main questions** we would like you to cover are **in bold**. We have also included some follow up prompt questions you may wish to use to extend discussion.

### **Health and wellbeing**

- **Do you have a positive attitude towards health and wellbeing at school?**
  - Can you give examples of health and wellbeing you have found interesting?
  - Can you see the point of health and wellbeing as part of the school day?
- **Are you confident when you are at school?**
  - Can you give examples of when you are more or less confident?
  - Is it difficult or straightforward to speak in front of others? Why is this so?
- **Do you have good relationships with other pupils at school?**
  - Is there mutual respect between you and your friends? Examples of this?
  - Can you usually work through disagreements you might have with friends?
- **Do you have good relationships with the teachers at school?**
  - Do teachers listen to any concerns you might have?
  - Do you feel a sense of belonging when at school?

### **Wider achievement**

- **Did the S3 profile provide you with a good chance to review your learning progress?**
  - Is completing a profile at the end of S3 is a good idea?
  - Did you have enough time to consider what to include in your profile?
- **Are you motivated to do well at school?**
  - What factors most influence your level of motivation?
  - Has your level of motivation changed since you started secondary school?
- **Was completing the S3 profile using for recording your wider achievements?**
  - Did the S3 profile help you review what you wish to study in S4-S6?
  - Did the S3 profile help you take on more responsibility for your learning?
- **Were teachers' suggestions on what to include in your profile helpful?**
  - Did you like discussing what to include in your profile?
  - Has the profile made it easier to appreciate your wider achievements?

**Thank you for your help**

**Table 3: Health and wellbeing and wider achievement: Teacher interview questions**

**Aims of health and wellbeing**

- **Thoughts on the CfE framework e.g., coherence of 3-18 educational aims and values - improved pupil interest, increased levels of wider achievement?**
  - Extra teacher decision-making and curriculum responsibilities under CfE?
  - Scale of CfE innovation?

**Health and wellbeing policy**

- **Health and wellbeing as a core competency for all teachers – merits of this intention?**
  - Are CfE policy documents on HWB sufficiently clear e.g., HWB Responsibility for All (2009); HWB Impact Report (2013)?
  - Do teachers have the skills and abilities to include HWB as part of their remit?
  - Many of the HWB experiences and outcomes are the same (not progressive) good idea?

**School culture**

- **How have you planned for the enhanced role of HWB since CfE began?**
- How central to the whole school ethos is HWB now?

**Curriculum Planning**

- **Is HWB planning more advanced in some years than others e.g., S1-S3 viz. S4-S6?**
  - Is HWB formally assessed?
  - Is HWB part of day to day subject teaching?
  - Is HWB part of first line guidance tutor time?
  - Has teacher workload increased as a consequence of CfE?

**Learning and Teaching**

- **Have greater holistic and integrated learning practices been part of HWB teaching? If so, how effective have they been?**
  - Have pupils embraced active learning approaches e.g., tasks which require discussion, debate and evaluation?
  - Can pupils self-report effectively on their HWB?
- **Has the S3 profile been a useful way of recording wider achievement?**
  - Have teachers engaged with the idea of discussing with pupils what to add to their profile?
  - How and when is the profile completed?
  - Has the profile played a part in improving teacher-pupil relationships?

**Evaluations of Practice**

- **Is HWB a school driver for increasing wider achievement and reducing inequality?**
  - How do you evaluate and measure the impact of programmes?
  - Are pupils generally more psychologically at ease with themselves as a consequence of HWB as part of CfE?
- **Should CfE be invested in for the foreseeable future?**
  - Has CfE's original aspiration been fulfilled over the last decade? Much still to do?
  - Has CfE helped teachers to think carefully about their practice?

**Table 4: Learner survey findings: Percentage figures for each statement from all respondents**

Health and Wellbeing	Total Percentage (%)				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I have developed my HWB at school	4	6	29	50	11
I know what my personal qualities are	2	8	15	56	19
I do NOT have a positive attitude towards health and wellbeing	3	9	33	40	15
I am growing more confident at school	6	11	18	48	17
I am NOT confident in managing my feelings	14	37	28	14	7
I am confident at speaking in front of whole class	23	23	23	22	9
I have good relationships with my friends at school	1	3	11	46	39
I am developing good coping skills when with my friends	2	4	19	53	22
I am NOT good at working through difficulties with my friends	15	44	26	11	4
I feel a sense of belonging in my school community	6	10	36	39	9
The teachers in my school do NOT listen to my concerns	13	34	36	10	7
I have good relationships with my teachers at school	4	8	34	42	12

**Table 4: Learner survey findings: Percentage figures for each statement from all respondents (continued)**

Wider Achievement	Total Percentage (%)				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The S3 profile gave me a good chance to think about my learning progress	7	7	35	41	10
The S3 profile was NOT helpful for recording how well I think I am doing at school	8	28	46	11	7
The S3 profile gave me a good chance to record achievements which are important to me	7	9	38	37	9
I work hard in my learning	2	2	16	53	27
I can bounce back from most disappointments	4	7	27	46	16
I am NOT motivated to do well at school	20	45	22	9	4
The S3 profile helped me feel better about my learning	8	10	46	32	4
The S3 profile did NOT help me to think about what I want to do in the future	10	25	41	15	9
The S3 profile helped me to make decisions about my course choices	9	12	38	32	9
Teacher comments on my S3 profile were helpful	10	13	43	27	7
Teacher made good suggestions on what would be useful to include in my profile	6	10	38	37	9
I did NOT think sharing my ideas for my profile was helpful	6	19	51	15	9

**Table 5: Learner survey findings: School responses to each of the statements from all respondents**

<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>		<b>Likert Scale (% of Responses)</b>				
Survey Prompts	School	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/ Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have developed my HWB at school	A	3.2	6.3	19.0	58.7	12.8
	B	7.4	9.8	32.0	45.9	4.9
	C	3.9	6.3	41.4	38.3	10.1
	D	0.0	1.6	19.2	61.6	17.6
I know what my personal qualities are	A	4.8	7.9	20.6	50.8	15.9
	B	4.9	13.1	16.4	46.7	18.9
	C	1.6	7.0	20.3	53.1	18.0
	D	0.0	3.2	6.4	69.6	20.8
I do NOT have a positive attitude towards health and wellbeing	A	6.3	3.2	30.2	46.0	14.3
	B	4.1	9.8	32.0	39.3	14.8
	C	1.6	14.1	36.7	34.3	13.3
	D	0.8	6.4	30.4	44.8	17.6
I am growing more confident at school	A	6.3	6.4	15.9	50.8	20.6
	B	12.3	14.8	18.9	45.8	8.2
	C	6.3	13.3	20.3	39.8	20.3
	D	0.8	7.2	14.4	56.0	21.6
I am NOT confident in managing my feelings	A	11.2	15.9	33.3	31.7	7.9
	B	7.4	18.0	21.3	36.1	17.2
	C	7.8	15.6	30.5	33.6	12.5
	D	4.0	8.8	27.2	45.6	14.4
I am confident at speaking in front of whole class	A	20.6	14.3	31.8	23.8	9.5
	B	23.8	27.8	16.4	23.0	9.0
	C	26.6	23.4	21.9	20.3	7.8
	D	17.6	21.6	28.0	22.4	10.4
I have good relationships with my friends at school	A	1.6	1.6	12.7	47.6	36.5
	B	2.4	4.1	7.4	44.3	41.8
	C	0.8	2.3	15.6	45.4	35.9
	D	0.0	2.4	8.0	47.2	42.4
I am developing good coping skills when with my friends	A	1.6	0	20.6	55.6	22.2
	B	3.2	3.3	21.3	48.4	23.8
	C	2.2	6.3	18	54.7	18.8
	D	0.0	3.2	17.6	53.6	25.6
I am NOT good at working through difficulties with my friends	A	3.2	9.5	27	41.3	19.0
	B	4.1	13.1	26.2	37.7	18.9



	C	4.7	14.1	22.6	46.1	12.5
	D	2.4	6.4	28.8	50.4	12.0
I feel a sense of belonging in my school community	A	3.2	11.1	33.3	46.0	6.4
	B	10.6	10.7	37.7	32.0	9.0
	C	5.5	8.6	37.5	37.5	10.9
	D	2.4	9.6	35.2	44.8	8.0
The teachers in my school do NOT listen to my concerns	A	6.3	6.4	33.3	33.3	20.7
	B	10.7	17.2	34.4	28.7	9.0
	C	4.7	3.1	42.2	35.2	14.8
	D	5.6	12.8	32.8	37.6	11.2
I have good relationships with my teachers at school	A	3.2	4.8	34.9	39.6	17.5
	B	11.5	11.4	36.1	32.0	9.0
	C	1.5	5.5	32.0	46.9	14.1
	D	0.0	10.4	32.8	47.2	9.6

**Table 5: Learner survey findings: School responses to each of the statements from all respondents (continued)**

<b>Wider Achievement</b>		<b>Likert Scale (% of responses)</b>				
Survey Prompts	School	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/ Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The S3 profile gave me a good chance to think about my learning progress	A	7.9	6.3	25.4	46.1	14.3
	B	11.5	3.3	51.6	30.3	3.3
	C	5.5	10.2	39.1	33.6	11.6
	D	4.8	8.0	20.8	55.2	11.2
The S3 profile was NOT helpful for recording how well I think I am doing at school	A	7.9	7.9	33.3	38.2	12.7
	B	7.4	11.5	60.7	13.1	7.3
	C	5.4	9.4	47.7	29.7	7.8
	D	7.2	12.0	36.8	36.0	8.0
The S3 profile gave me a good chance to record achievements which are important to me	A	4.8	6.3	38.1	36.5	14.3
	B	12.3	7.4	48.4	30.3	1.6
	C	6.3	9.4	39.1	34.4	10.8
	D	4.8	10.4	25.6	46.4	12.8
I work hard in my learning	A	1.6	0.0	15.9	52.4	30.1
	B	5.7	1.6	19.7	45.1	27.9
	C	1.6	3.1	11.7	62.5	21.1
	D	0.0	1.6	15.2	52.8	30.4
I can bounce back from most disappointments	A	0.0	7.9	33.3	44.4	14.4
	B	5.8	9.8	24.6	42.6	17.2
	C	7.8	7.0	28.9	43.0	13.3
	D	0.0	4.0	23.2	55.2	17.6
I am NOT motivated to do well at school	A	4.8	4.8	25.4	46.0	19.0
	B	5.7	10.7	27.9	37.7	18.0
	C	3.1	9.4	24.2	45.3	18.0
	D	2.4	8.0	14.4	51.2	24.0
The S3 profile helped me feel better about my learning	A	4.8	17.5	28.6	42.9	6.2
	B	9.0	9.0	56.6	24.6	0.8
	C	7.8	10.9	50.8	23.4	7.1
	D	8.8	7.2	38.4	41.6	4.0
The S3 profile did NOT help me to think about what I want to do in the future	A	11.1	11.1	36.5	30.2	11.1
	B	9.0	14.8	50.0	18.0	8.2
	C	8.6	15.6	44.5	20.4	10.9
	D	8.8	16.8	30.4	34.4	9.6
The S3 profile helped me to make decisions about my course choices	A	6.4	9.5	33.3	34.9	15.9
	B	9.8	8.2	50.8	27.9	3.3

	C	10.2	17.2	38.2	25.0	9.4
	D	9.6	10.4	28.0	42.4	9.6
Teacher comments on my S3 profile were helpful	A	6.3	11.2	42.9	31.7	7.9
	B	13.1	12.3	41.8	30.3	2.5
	C	8.6	15.6	50.0	19.5	6.3
	D	9.6	12.8	37.6	29.6	10.4
Teacher made good suggestions on what would be useful to include in my profile	A	3.2	7.9	42.9	39.7	6.3
	B	10.7	13.1	54.9	20.5	0.8
	C	5.5	10.9	34.4	35.9	13.3
	D	1.6	8.0	24.0	52.8	13.6
I did NOT think sharing my ideas for my profile was helpful	A	4.8	17.5	49.2	22.2	6.3
	B	9.0	9.0	59.8	15.6	6.6
	C	9.4	16.4	51.6	16.4	6.2
	D	11.2	16.8	44.0	22.4	5.6